

## Notices

Good morning and a very warm welcome to our worship here at Tyndale. If you are watching from home or indeed here with us, a regular attendee, or a visitor, we hope you will feel at home with us as we worship together.

This morning I am pleased to welcome back our minister Michael Docker, who is taking our service today after a couple of weeks off. We thank you for leading our worship Michael and look forward to sharing this time together.

On Tuesday at 11am, our usual zoom coffee shop will take place. Do join us if you are free, to catch up with one another, the joining details can be found on the website.

Also, as usual, we have our zoom coffee shop after this morning's service at 11.30 for those that are able to make it. Thank you.

## Welcome

Welcome to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church, here in the building, on-line or following the script. Today marks another 'step on the way' – I would like to thank the opening-up committee for its careful consideration of things here at Tyndale – in line with the Government's move from dictat to personal responsibility it has sought to allow maximum freedom *with* careful and diligent arrangements – always guided by the Christian imperative to care for one another and to look out for the most vulnerable. To that end and with great joy we shall sing as a congregation today, but only whilst remaining seated; and we ask that you continue to wear masks when arriving and leaving – only taking them off in your seats. The toilets are open (to the rear..) and hand sanitisers remain in place – we would strongly encourage you to use them as has now become the norm. All this so that we might ensure that this church provides a safe and secure and *peaceful* place in which to worship..

['Christ be in my waking'](#)

Stuart Townend

## Call to Worship

In the daily round we acknowledge the presence of Christ in every aspect of our lives as we come in his name with devoted, longing hearts to worship God

## BPW 54 'Let all the world in every corner sing'

### Opening Prayer

Lord God, praise rises in our hearts; we catch your Spirit as we live and breathe, and we praise you; worship grows from our lives; we sense your presence as we live and move - and we worship you; thanksgiving flows from our experience; we see your goodness in all that we receive - and we thank you; Lord God we praise and worship your holy name, and we give you thanks –

Yet, Lord, questions, also rise in our hearts - as we live with the constant background noise of suffering in the world – Lord hear our questioning, yearning hearts – and remind us that you are here in mystery, in signs of love, in acts of good, in the promise to save from all that would destroy; Lord, deepen our trust in you; you are here in Jesus, revealing your love, bringing us to a new day, rising to lift us up; Lord, deepen our knowledge of you; you are here by your Spirit, leading us in your way, encouraging us as we walk, praying for us when we cannot pray – Lord, deepen our awareness of you –

Forgive us, restore us, show us once again a world of need and plenty, joy and sorrow; the very place you love, to which you have come in Jesus Christ – Lord, receive our worship our praise and our thanks, for Jesus' sake

### Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Reading: [Ephesians 3.14-21](#)

'There is none like you'.

Sung by Mike Garnier

Reading 2 Samuel 11.1-15

'Love of God revealed in wonder'

Stuart Townend

### Sermon: Hallelujah

Hallelujah - we can sing again; before 'the Lord of song'..as David sang..

David, the representative of God on earth. The great King. The chosen one. The mighty warrior. The Saviour of the ark. David - who sang *songs of hallelujah* –

I like the Leonard Cohen '[Hallelujah](#)' – *and* songs of lament and trust.

Who established Jerusalem. David – deeply embedded in the story of Israel; highest of the high in the genealogy of Jesus – great David's greater Son.

Need I go on? I'll go on...the very epitome of the good godly King – who wielded raw, political, military, religious power...

David – 'the spirit of the Lord was upon him'; 'Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.'; - had success in all his undertakings; for the LORD was with him...David I'm building him up just as the Bible builds him up. Just as Weston art has built him up – Michelangelo's sculpture (in Florence) of David, to some the crowning achievement of renaissance art; as someone said, 'greater than "all ancient & modern statues, whether Greek or Latin, that have ever existed."

It's sometimes said that if you wanted to see what a human being could *be* – could *become*; *beautiful, strong, wise, powerful* – *godly David, or humanly David*.

David - abused his power to help himself to Bathsheba, to impregnate her; to murder her devout husband Uriah, to lie, cheat and steal...

Thou shalt not – remember the 10 commandments?

*You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife... or anything that belongs to your neighbour.*

*David – coveted, adulterated, murdered – there's 3 for starters! , Abused his power..*

We are living in days when power is being exposed like never before. As we hang on every word from a podium we are increasingly conscious of *power* –

The power to open or close down businesses, livelihoods, activities; to enforce or change behaviours; to say 'yes' or 'no' to what millions of people do in their daily lives.

It has long been like this, but have we ever been so aware of it as now? The machinations of the powerful are in our faces every day on TV, social media; newspapers & magazines.

As are their frailties. Affairs; excesses; U-turns; unanswered questions. 'Chumocracy'. Once all-consuming debates now hardly mentioned. Confusing messages; sincerity, or the lack.

There's little distance. Perhaps it's the pandemic. Before, debates took place in Parliament and committee rooms behind closed doors; sometimes there was a report in the next-day news; sometimes current affairs buffs could seek it out on their favourite programmes – mostly we didn't have to bother if we didn't want to...now...*it's in your face*...

The story of David and Bathsheba is in your face as well. Here's the great political leader of his day caught with his pantaloons down – or whatever they used to wear in those days.

It's an excruciating story: the great man of God shown up for an adulterer, a liar, a manipulator, a murderer.

The story lays bare the way raw power bears down on ordinary people. Feminists fume at the story-telling in which we never hear Bathsheba's voice; she seems to have no choice;

There've been attempts to rehabilitate her; maybe she seduced the King as much as he stalked her, that kind of thing..

But come on; we know what's going on here – we've followed the Sarah Everard story; we've heard about sisters Nicole Smallman & Bibaa Henry murdered in a London park; we know about the low number of rape prosecutions; the closing of women's refuges..;

We've watched the TV news reports about sex trafficking – into Bristol, as much as elsewhere; we've heard of the rapidly increasing rates of domestic violence during lockdown perhaps we've read reports of the daily, almost casual sexual assaults – stalking, groping on trains; cat-calls and wolf whistles and casual misogyny...

We know. Bathsheba was used & abused. David behaved despicably towards her and murderously – *murderously* – to Uriah her husband, who, throughout, acts with religious honour – even though he was from a foreign faith .

(A friend of mine went to Morocco with an evangelical mission & came back bewildered because, he said, the most devout man he'd ever met was the local Muslim Imam...)

& at the heart of the Bible, part of the story of salvation, tangled up with the antecedents of Jesus, is a tale of injustice, uncontrolled lust, murder & the abuse of power against women.. Talk about in your face; Talk about rubbing our noses in it. This goes far beyond a tale of forgiveness and grace for the boy-King – read on to see how the tragedy unfolds, as the son born out of wedlock dies and David's fortunes begin to run out into the sand.

It's in the Bible. I get a bit annoyed when I hear people banging on about obeying the Word of God as if it were a compendium of instructions – it's not; it's a hellish book in parts; it drips with violence in parts; it's full of prostitutes, spies & wayward Kings –

and through it all God's promise finds a way until it fetches up in Galilee and the story of Jesus – and the wayward, murderous, lust-filled, power-abusing King is in His ancestry. So perhaps our faith exposes abusive power and human frailty every bit as much as this pandemic. Perhaps the Bible is intended to shackle our faith not to some other-worldly religion, but to a *this-worldly* devotion –

perhaps we who live by faith in Christ do so knowing that toxic masculinity, abusive power-mongering, duplicity and injustice run through our veins like an out-of-control virus.

I don't think it will be enough if the old, traditional interpretation of David the forgiven King is replaced with a rediscovery of the wronged-but-righteous Bathsheba –

there's research going on into how she's been traduced down the centuries and about the oft-cited David & Bathsheba romance – you know? Hallelujah, by Leonard Cohen:

*Your faith was strong but you needed proof; You saw her bathing on the roof  
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew her*

But maybe it *will* be enough if the Bible rubs our noses in the depths of human sinfulness and points the way to a grace and forgiveness that knows no bounds.

As Paul says in *Ephesians* - *I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

And then, I imagine like David, or like Jesus on the Cross, we might be able to sing (something like Leonard Cohen sang) *And even though it all went wrong, I'll stand right here before the Lord of song With nothing, nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah*

### Offering

Lord, we come to you; our hearts are gladdened by your presence and our spirits are strengthened as we have listened for your Word – and we give of ourselves in these and all our gifts, so that we may echo Paul's prayer for our world:

I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

### The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy spirit be with us all, evermore, amen.

**'The love of God comes close'**

John Bell & Graham Maule

*Alternative middle lines (last verse): where what he said is done, with love, as when he came;*

### Intercessions

Dear Father God, we know that among us and close to us there are those who are suffering from ailments and accidents and in our communities there are those suffering from Covid 19 or from the grief that follows from losing a loved one to this dreadful disease – and as here so in many places around the world.

God the language of healing and wholeness belongs wherever we speak of your love and forgiveness and grace. We would speak that language today; bring healing to the sick, comfort to the anxious and bereaved -in a moment of silence we name before you any known to us and bring to mind others in the world of whom we can do little more than imagine..(silence).

Lord thank you for translating the language of healing into medical practice and research; neighbourly care and compassion; familial love and long-suffering, the disinterested help of churches. Mosques, gurdwaras, temples and synagogues.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us**

Dear Lord, we see world leaders embracing division instead of unity, pursuing wealth instead of justice & speaking lies instead of the truth as in many places power is used & abused

Lord the language of justice and fairness belongs wherever we speak of your love, forgiveness and grace. We would speak that language today; strengthen justice in the world's courts; lodge compassion in the hearts of those who lead and administer institutions; banish self-serving and self-preservation -in a moment of silence we name before you any of whom we are aware near or far who cry out for an end to poverty, the beginnings of true freedom and the right use of power.

Lord thank you for translating the language of justice into law-making, journalistic endeavour, public service, whistleblowing and speaking the truth to power.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us**

Now, Lord, remake us in your image; lift us above the temptations of power and the denial of violence used in our name – in a moment of silence we come before you ourselves and ask you to form us into truly goldy men and women in the image of your Son Jesus Christ.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us**

In his name we pray, **Amen**

**BPW 559 'Love divine'**

### **Blessing**

The blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always, amen.

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible Ian recording and processing; Nick printing and posting; Rachel sorting music and playing with Ali and Dave, Tyndale singers singing 'live' and virtually; Denise and Graham reading, the Stewarding Team preparing, watching over us, and cleaning up after – thanks everyone for taking part.

As we begin to adjust – no doubt with some caution – to greater freedom we seek God's wisdom as we continue to live by faith 'till we meet again'

**'You raise me up'**

Alexandria Singers, Washington DC